

resolution seeks to make this monument a reality.

Time is against us, as has been already pointed out, as the veterans of World War II are dying at a rate that exceeds 1,000 every day; and if we do not act now, we may miss the opportunity to finally ensure proper remembrance for those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation and indeed preserved the Nation. It is one of the great monuments, when we look at what has happened on the mall, where we have the Washington Monument, which in a sense honors the founding of this Nation; and we look at the Lincoln Memorial, which preserves the national division from within.

We have in this memorial testimony to preserving the Nation in the face of challenges from abroad. So it is entirely fitting and proper that as we go through the sequence of American history, we take the time to honor those important events which this Nation experienced and in which this Nation thrived.

The World War II memorial will be discussed mostly in the sense of what happened during the battles of World War II, and I hope to make my own contribution to that. But we should always be mindful as well that World War II represented the maturation of our country as a world power, which has continued to the present. It is more than simply the battles of World War II; it has really shaped and reshaped the destiny of not only our Nation and the years subsequent to it, but indeed the entire world.

My own part in this memorial was to try to bring recognition to the people of Guam who experienced a terrible occupation during World War II as the only American territory with civilians still present who experienced occupation during World War II, and the Chamorros, who were American nationals at the time, remained steadfastly loyal to the United States, and this resistance to conquest only exacerbated the brutality which they experienced. So for the people of Guam, this has a very special significance as well.

One of the immediate challenges that we faced in trying to deal with the memorial was that there were an anticipated 50 pillars, each loosely reflecting each one of the 50 States. And one of the lessons that we tried to work with as the memorial underwent some rethinking and underwent public input was to finally expand the number to 56 so that indeed all States and territories would be included in the commemoration of World War II. I believe that the people of Guam are not only grateful, but deserve this recognition and attention. The people of Guam not only suffered the indignities of a Japanese occupation. Hundreds were executed and many, many more died as a result of the battle, as a result of deprivation, as a result of hunger.

One of the biggest holidays in Guam, even today, is July 21, which commemorates the landing of the U.S. Ma-

rines on July 21, 1944, which commemorates and celebrates the arrival of their fellow Americans to free the island from the hands of the Japanese and, more importantly, to cement a very strong relationship which exists to this day.

So this is a monument in which it is in the right place. I can think of no better place for it to be. Because when one comes to the Nation's capital, the whole Nation's history should be before us; and it would be a great testimony to the World War II generation.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in strong support of this measure, H.R. 1696, a bill expediting the construction of the national World War II memorial here in our Nation's capital, and I urge my colleagues to join in lending their support to this legislation. I commend the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP), the distinguished chairman of our Committee on Armed Services, who is to be commended for his long-term diligent efforts to bring this measure to fruition.

This legislation states that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, NEPA, the Commemorative Works Act, and any other laws pertaining to the citing and design of the memorial, have been fully met.

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This measure allows the American Battle Monuments Commission to proceed expeditiously with construction of this long overdue veterans memorial to our World War II veterans at the dedicated Rainbow Pool site.

Moreover, the measure mandates that the decision to construct this memorial at the Rainbow Pool site and decisions regarding the design of the memorial are final and conclusive and should not be subject to any further administrative or judicial review.

Mr. Speaker, despite being authorized by Congress 8 years ago and having broken ground last year, which I was pleased to participate in, the construction of the World War II memorial has been delayed indefinitely. The decisions on location of the memorial and on its design were the subject of an open and dedicated process that included 22 public hearings over the past 5 years.

Despite these extensive reviews, there remains a small but vocal opposition that is prepared to block construction of the memorial on the Mall at all costs. The majority rule and the democratic process apparently means nothing to many of those opposed to the memorial, some of whom have succeeded in blocking construction with a

pending lawsuit and a minor procedural issue.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that these petty delays will deprive hundreds of thousands of World War II veterans of the opportunity to ever review or visit the memorial. Only 5 million of the 16 million veterans who served in the Second World War remain with us, and we lose, as it has been indicated earlier today, 1,100 World War II veterans each and every day.

As a World War II veteran, I take offense at this small-minded opposition who want to block construction at all costs. What they forget is that it was the contributions of those who fought in World War II that permits them to freely voice their obstructionist views.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that the opposition has had ample time to speak. When subjected to a democratic vote, the location and design of the memorial was approved. It is now over time, long overdue to move forward with the construction of this important memorial for our World War II veterans.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, we have all been here this afternoon talking about honoring our World War II veterans, the greatest generation. We have all talked about how long it has taken to honor these veterans, how many have died, even in the planning process.

Mr. Speaker, there is one group of veterans of World War II that has waited 55 years to be honored. This Congress can proceed to do so. The previous speaker, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), and I have introduced legislation called the "Filipino Veterans Equity Act."

In 1941, this country drafted all of the regular and irregular forces of the Philippine army and guerilla units. They fought in World War II. They fought in World War II. They held up the advance of the Japanese army. They surrendered with our forces at Bataan, suffered through the Bataan Death March, bravely defended our last forces at Corregidor. They stopped the Japanese timetable for many, many months, allowed us to regroup, and allowed MacArthur time eventually to return and take back the Philippines.

Yet, in 1946 this country, this Congress in 1946, decided to take away all the veterans' benefits that were promised to these brave heroes of World War II. It has been 55 years since that action was taken. It is time to restore the honor and dignity of the Filipino veterans. It is time to give them back the honor and the benefits that we promised but just took away.

We talk today about honoring our World War II heroes. We talk today about the freedom that they have given us and our Nation. As we talk about